

Accessibility Subgroup

Vote Indiana Planning Team

February 28, 2003

Subgroup members present: Dick Dodge, Dee Ann Hart, Suellen Jackson-Boner, Jon Laramore, Patricia Podowski (proxy for Sally LaSota), Nick Rhoad, Kristi Robertson, Joe Ryan. Facilitator: Sarah Taylor

Others present: Duane Conover (Whiting Republican Central Committee), Pam Finlayson, (Vote Indiana Team member) Mike Rothrock, (Count Us In), Julia Vaughn (Count Us In)

Each subgroup member introduced him or herself and gave an overview of their perspective on the accessibility subject.

Discussion was held on the different accessibility issues that occur in the electoral process. Concern was expressed about the inaccessibility of polling locations in addition to the type of voting equipment used. Comments were also made about other types of barriers including language and education. Kristi Roberston added that no Indiana County fell under section 203 of the Voting Rights Act however Indiana statute does allow for a county to have election materials in more than one language.

Lake County and Allen County described surveys their election offices had undertaken at the polling locations. **Pam Finlayson will provide a copy of Allen County's at the next meeting. Pam will also provide a document issued by the Governmental Accounting Office (GAO) on this subject. Sarah Taylor will request a copy of Marion County's survey.** Lake County provided a copy of their survey for the next meeting. Many members mentioned their desire for a comprehensive statewide polling place accessibility study. **Sarah will also provide the Indiana Election Division's brochure on accessibility for the next meeting.**

The right to vote in private independently was also a concern of members. Kristi gave an overview of Indiana statute pertaining to military and overseas voters ability to vote by fax. The secrecy of the ballot is waived in these instances. Pam had questions concerning states that conduct all mail elections on paper and how they work with voters with impairments. **Pam will call Al Davidson in Oregon about their procedures.**

Comments were made that this subgroup will share some issues with the Training and Education subgroup and the Voting Equipment subgroup.

Public Comment: Duane Conover agreed that discussion should be held about military and overseas voters right to an acknowledgement that their ballot was received. Julia

Vaughn would like there to be a HAVA deadline placed on other accessible issues than just voting equipment. She is in favor of spending money on a statewide polling place accessibility study. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines should be followed in all instances. Julia suggested bringing field experts in to work out solutions. Mike Rothrock surveyed Bartholmew County's polling places this past election. His survey was provided to members present. He indicated that there are many simple things you can do to a polling place to make it better. It costs little to have correct signage and striping. He added changing door handles and moving voting equipment away from the walls are easy tasks to accomplish but make a big difference.

The next meeting's agenda will include a **review by Kristi and Jon on HAVA's must dos**. The next step will be to start tackling the tasks described under Accessibility in the Task Lists for Subgroups document received in the mail. Suellen suggested the definition of accessible be reviewed.

The next meeting of the Accessibility Subgroup will be March 14, 2003 at 2:30 p.m.